

As the believer approaches the grave, he finds a thousand lights glowing in its once dark abodes. Sin was once the sting of death, but sin has been washed out and blotted away. The strength of sin once was the law, but now the law finds in Christ a perfect obedience, and appropriates His merits to all who live in Him. Hence Paul asks with rapture, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave where is thy victory?" But Christ having come, having entered into the grave, having tasted death for all men, those who believe in Him will conquer tho they die. Corresponding with this is the dying testimony of believers in all ages and climes. Sinners out of Christ have found the grave deep and dark, the form of death as terrible as ever. Believers in Christ have found the grave a resting place. They have gone down into the tomb, saying, "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with Him in glory." "Triumphant is the Victor's bow, Fanned by some guardian angel's wing; O grave, where is thy victory now? And where, O death, is now thy sting?"

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BIBLICAL ESSAY—Continued

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Some commentators and authors, as well as theologians, writers and ministers entertain and teach the idea that the baptism that John administered, and that administered by the apostles during the incarnation of Christ differed in "mode" and "form." The writer does not so understand or teach the inspired word. Christ, incarnate, did not originate or institute the sacred ordinance. God himself originated and taught the forerunner how to administer the rite. Maybe for aught our humanity knows, God did incarnate himself and administer the holy rite to John, hence Christ asked by the Jews, "Was the baptism of John from heaven or by men?" John testifies as follows: "He that sent me to baptize;" and again, "There was a man sent from God, whose name was John." Now, if God thru John instituted the rite, which Christ, in a negative interrogation to the Jews, said came from heaven, he would not in his incarnation assume the authority to make any change. He declared that "he came not to do his own will, but the will of his Father that sent him;" and, "The words that I speak are not my own, but the Father's that sent me;" and again, "Father I have finished the work thou gavest me to do." If Christ had introduced a different *mode* and *form* from that administered by John, no doubt the Jews would have disputed concerning this difference as well as that of purifying. Is it at all logical to conclude that Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God would humbly bow in weak submission to the baptism that came from heaven, declaring the same to be right, or a part of righteousness, and then within a short period of time institute a new or different mode and form of bap-

tism? Such a course would wholly annihilate the Bible as containing the inspired word of God.

But now some one may ask, how could the Son of God be baptized in his own name! A sufficient answer might be that his divine nature was not, could not be, and did not need baptism, while his human nature could be and was, no doubt baptized in the name of the *divine*. It is written of Christ that, "He emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of man;" again, "He was made flesh and dwelt among us." Christ and the apostles who were chosen from among the disciples of John were all baptized in the same manner by the same administration, and this baptism was evidently an acknowledgement of the mode and form administered by the forerunner to be the God-given rite that came from heaven.

When Christ first sent out the twelve, then the seventy, he confined them to their own nationality, until the prophecies relating to the atonement would be fulfilled and the church of the living God be built, and the law for her government be submitted to the chosen witnesses, and until by sign and wonders, divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Spirit according to the will of God during the incarnation of Christ and the Apostolic Age the word of God or his divine law for the government of his Church, would be by these special miraculous manifestations of God fully authenticated and confirmed.

After his resurrection, Christ when dispossessed of his humanity and possessed of all power in heaven and earth, extended the great mission field far beyond the Hebrew nation, thus offering salvation to all the nations of earth.

The great commission as recorded by the several Evangelists is not a new commission given by Christ after his resurrection, but simply an extension of the mission field from the Hebrew nation to all nations, to every creature, to all the world; discipling all the nations the same as the Israelitish; baptizing all the nations as they did the Jewish, "into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." With this agree the teachings of the Apostle Paul in his Epistle to the Ephesians, saying that, "There is but one God and Father of us all," that is of all nations, "one Spirit," the Holy Spirit; "one Lord," only one Lord Jesus Christ as the great redeemer of all nations. Not one Lord for the Hebrews and another Lord for other nations or one for each nation, "one Faith" for all nations, "one baptism," the same for Jews and Gentiles; not one mode and form for one nation, and other modes and forms for other nations, but one for all, that God may be all in all.

May the triune God—Father, Son and Holy Spirit, bless his own revelation to all the nations of the world. May the time be near at hand when the watchmen shall see eye to eye, and "all speak the same things and walk by the same rule," coming to a unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace, attain-

ing unto the full stature of manhood and womanhood in Christ Jesus our Lord. Now may the triune God sanctify his truth to our hearts and give us all proper conceptions of the same and enable us to live out in our daily lives the great and grand principles of that salvation that saves eternally. Amen.

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THE DRESS QUESTION

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We are not much in the habit of discussing this weighty theological problem, but some of the things we read in our religious exchanges, and some of the things we see, and some of the things we hear, direct our thoughts thither occasionally. No one denies that the extravagant dressing of the fashionable world is an expression of unregenerate vanity, a sin that has crept into some of the churches. We sometimes hear worldly people say of such and such a congregation that it is only a dress parade, and the criticism is to some extent true. The love of rag display is unquestionably prevalent in many churches, and pastors should lovingly warn their people against a silly and hurtful habit, hurtful to themselves and to the cause they represent. Undoubtedly the dress is an index to the character. A slouchy mind hangs out its signs all over the body. So does a vain spirit, a silly pride. Intellectual culture, cleanness of spirit, will be reflected on the external man or woman. A sane person, morally and mentally, will dress in a neat, becoming, unostentatious manner. He will avoid slouchiness on the one hand as carefully as he avoids display on the other. The monastic idea has been set up in all ages as a bulwark against dress vanity, but its history does not tend to prove its usefulness. We know far more of its evils than we do of its virtues. As a legislative expedient, the severe uniform tends more to slouchiness than it does to piety and humility. There was a time when a man with a sackcloth bag over his person, his hair full of ashes and his beard full of dirt, was regarded as a very holy man. Today he would be supremely ridiculous. Times and ideas have changed. The Lord himself changed them when he "made all things new." For all time he lifted religion from the legislative to the spiritual plane. Creeds, disciplines, minutes, decisions, are absolutely without verbal authority in the eyes of the Lord. Only that in them which is intrinsically and essentially true has authority over any soul. If this fact were once fully grasped there would be an end to ecclesiastical rule, and the free and enlightened conscience would come into its own glorious liberty, the "liberty of the children of God."

Now I want you to think that in life troubles will come, which seem as if they would never pass away. The night and the storm look as if they would last forever, but the calm and the morning can not be stayed; the storm in its very nature is transient.—*George MacDonald.*